DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 252 588 TM 850 065

TITLE	Kindergarten Nonattenders: Starting out Behind.
INSTITUTION	Austin Independent School District, Tex. Office of Research and Evaluation.
REPORT NO	AISD-ORE-83.41
PUB DATE	[84]
NOTE	18p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Office of Research and Evaluation, AISD, 6100 Guadalupe, Box 79, Austin, TX 78752 ($1.00 plus $1.00 postage).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Attendance Patterns; *Educationally Disadvantaged; *Grade 1; High Risk Students; *Kindergarten; Low Income Groups; Primary Education; *School Entrance Age; Student Characteristics
IDENTIFIERS	*Austin Independent School District TX

ABSTRACT

In 1983 first graders who had not attended Austin Independent School District (AISD) kindergarten were studied to identify the number and characteristics of kindergarten nonattenders. Data were collected during parent/teacher conferences and by telephone interviews. Of 4550 first graders, 83 (2 percent) were kindergarten nonattenders and 473 (10 percent) attended other kindergartens. The nonattenders came from low income families scattered throughout the district. Over half were in day care while the rest stayed home. There were more blacks and fewer Anglos proportionally among nonattenders than among first graders as a whole. Of the nonattenders who are in Chapter 1 schools, 70% are being served by the Chapter 1 Program for low achievers. First grade retention rates are 13 percent for nonattenders and 9 percent for students who attended AISD kindergarten. Kindergarten nonattenders are at high risk for failure. More effective recruiting could improve the chances for students who might otherwise not attend kindergarten. (BS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED252588

TM 850 065

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

F. Holley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A copy of this report may be obtained for $1.00 plus $1.00 for postage and handling from the address below. Pub. No. 83.41
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION, AISD,
6100 GUADALUPE, BOX 79, AUSTIN, TX. 78752

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

KINDERGARTEN NONATTENDERS: STARTING OUT BEHIND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Students who enter the first grade in the Austin Independent School District (AISD) with no previous school experience - without kindergarten - are a small group whose needs are only beginning to be known.

In 1982-83 the compensatory program evaluations by the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) noted that substantially fewer students were enrolled in AISD kindergarten than in first grade. Where were these students before they entered first grade? In fall, 1983, ORE studied first graders who had not attended AISD kindergarten to find whether they had attended other schools. We wanted to find the number and characteristics of students who had no previous school experience and whether the nonattenders were at high risk for failure.

HOW MANY WERE REALLY NONATTENDERS?

- We estimate that 83 of 4550 first-time first graders (2%) are kindergarten nonattenders - they experienced no formal education prior to first grade. They either stayed at home or in day care.
- We estimate that 473 of 4550 (10%) attended other kindergartens:
  - 3% are known to have attended private/church schools, and
  - 6% are known to have attended public schools in other districts.

WHO ARE THE NONATTENDERS?

- Most have low family income, with 95% receiving free or reduced-price lunch.
- They are scattered throughout AISD, at 36 of the 45 elementary schools with first grades.
- Over half went to day-care centers or were cared for in private homes, while 40% stayed in their own homes.
- There were more Blacks and fewer Anglos proportionately among nonattenders than among first graders as a whole.
- Of the nonattenders who are in Chapter 1 schools, 70% are being served by the Chapter 1 Program for low achievers.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS?

- Kindergarten nonattenders - first graders with no previous school experience - show characteristics which indicate they are a minority at high risk for failure. In fact, the District retention rate is 13% for first graders who attended no kindergarten or a school other than AISD, while the retention rate for students who attended AISD kindergarten is only 9%.
- AISD early childhood and kindergarten programs have produced impressive achievement gains for students.
- More effective recruiting could improve the chances for early success for students who might otherwise not attend kindergarten.

KINDERGARTEN NONATTENDERS: STARTING OUT BEHIND

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Of 4,550 first-time first graders, 12% did not attend kindergarten in AISD.

2. An estimated 2% (83) of the first-time first graders are kindergarten nonattenders - they experienced no formal education prior to first grade.

3. We estimate 10% of first graders attended other kindergartens:
   - 3% are known to have attended private/church schools, and
   - 6% are known to have attended schools in other districts.

4. Almost all (95%) of the kindergarten nonattenders come from low-income families.

5. Seventy percent of the 27 kindergarten nonattenders who are in Chapter 1 schools' first grades are receiving Chapter 1 services for low achievers. Forty four percent of students in the same Chapter 1 schools are served.

6. Over one fourth of the parents whose children went to day-care centers rather than attending kindergarten made that decision based on their need for extended hours of supervision while parents were at work.

7. A higher percentage (13%) of students who did not attend an AISD kindergarten was retained in first grade than of students with kindergarten experience in AISD (9%).

EVALUATION SUMMARY

ORE has found that first-grade enrollment has always been substantially larger than kindergarten enrollment. A number of first graders do not attend kindergarten in AISD, and may not attend at all. We planned to address the following questions this year:

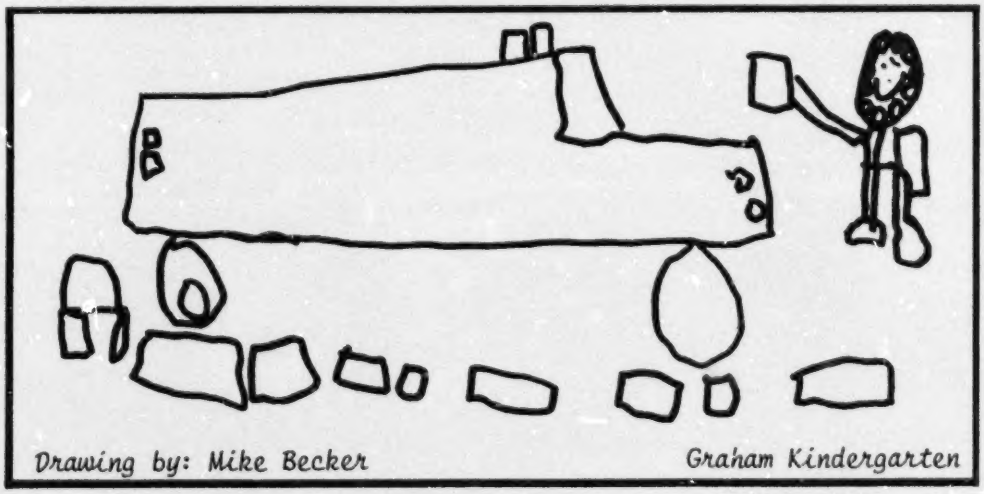
- How many AISD first-grade students did not attend kindergarten?
- How many AISD first-grade students attended other kindergartens?
- What are the characteristics of kindergarten nonattenders?
- Why did kindergarten nonattenders not attend?
- Is the retention rate the same for AISD kindergarten attenders and nonattenders?

Data collection:

The parents of students who had not attended AISD kindergarten were interviewed by first-grade teachers during the fall parent/teacher conference at the District schools. Teachers asked parents, "What did your child do from September, 1982, through May, 1983?"

Telephone interviews with parents who did not complete a survey were conducted. To identify the reasons students had not attended kindergarten, the telephone interview sample also included parents of students who had previously been identified through the teacher conferences as not having attended kindergarten anywhere.

The flowchart in Figure A summarized the information gathered at each screening step. The number of students who attended AISD kindergarten, who did not attend kindergarten anywhere, and who attended elsewhere are presented in circles.



Drawing by: Mike Becker *Graham Kindergarten*

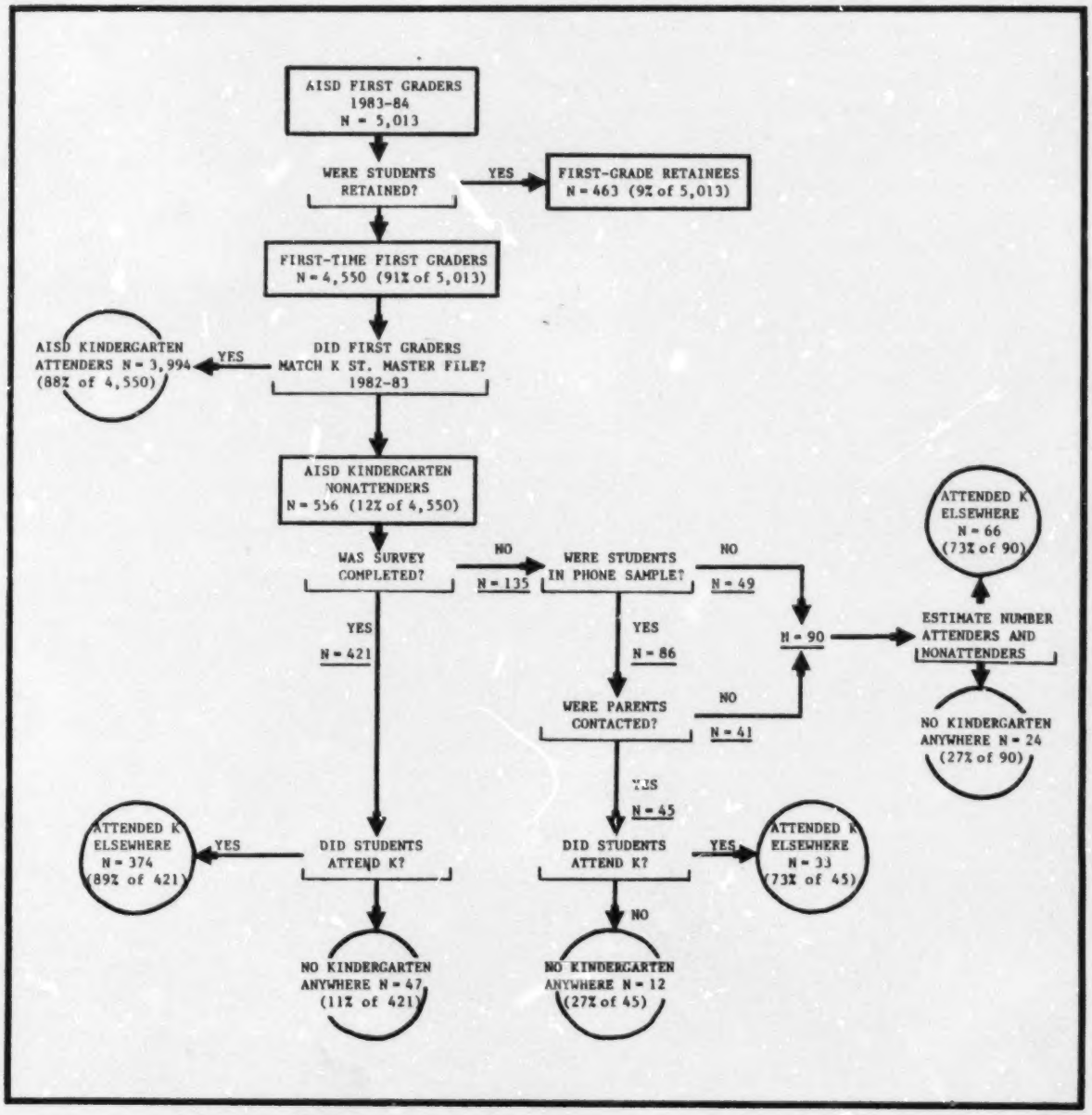


Figure A. FLOWCHART OF THE METHOD USED TO DETERMINE WHETHER FIRST GRADERS HAD ATTENDED KINDERGARTEN.

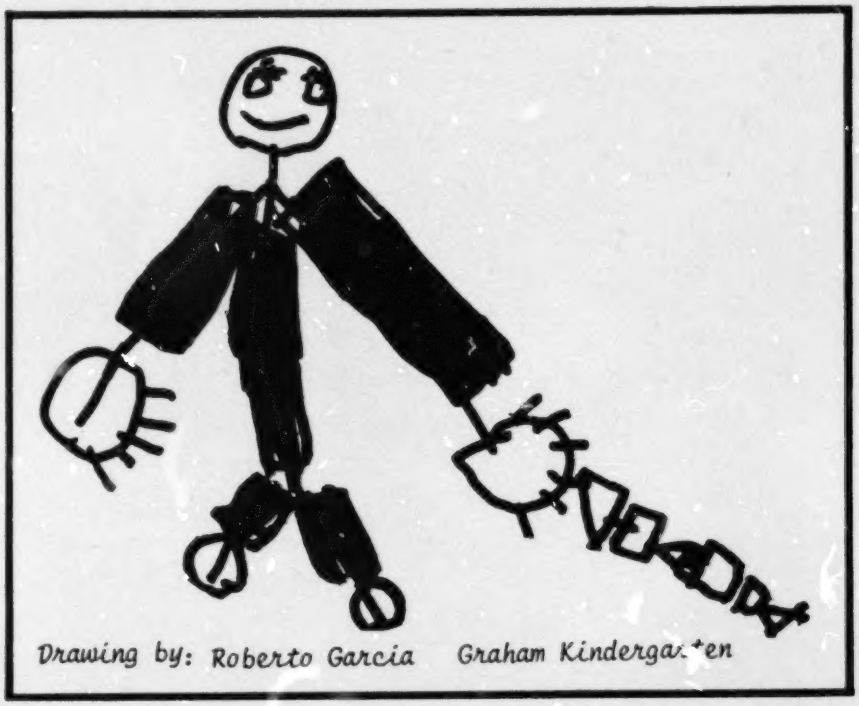
HOW MANY STUDENTS DID NOT ATTEND KINDERGARTEN?

How many first-grade students did not attend kindergarten in AISD?

Of the 4,550 students enrolled in first grade who were not retainees from last school year, 12% (556/4,550) were identified as not attending an AISD kindergarten.

How many students who did not attend an AISD kindergarten were kindergarten nonattenders?

According to the results of the survey and telephone interviews 59 first-time first graders were kindergarten nonattenders. It is estimated that 83 first-time first graders in AISD did not attend a kindergarten anywhere. This number represents 1.8% (83 of 4,550) of the AISD first-time first grade.



Drawing by: Roberto Garcia Graham Kindergarten

How many students attended kindergarten elsewhere?

Information was obtained for 407 of the 473 students estimated to have attended kindergarten elsewhere. Of these students, 65% (263 of 407) attended kindergarten in a public school in another district, 23% (95 of 407) went to a private school, and 12% (49 of 407) enrolled in church schools.

Figure B displays what students who attended kindergarten elsewhere did. The categories of alternative schooling were not mutually exclusive. It is possible, for example, that a student may have enrolled in a public school in another district but transferred to a day-care center or a private school during the school year. Figure B shows the multiple responses of individuals. Most students who attended other kindergartens moved to AISD between kindergarten and first grade.

Rank	Alternative	Number Attending
1.	Public school outside AISD	181
2.	Private school	61
3.	Public school outside AISD and home	30
4.	Public school outside AISD and day care	27
5.	Church school	30
6.	Private school and day care	15
7.	Public school and private home	15
8.	Church school and day care	14
9.	Private school and church school	9
10.	Private school and home	6
11.	Church school and child's home	4
12.	Private school, public school and day care	4
13.	Private school, church school and day care	4
14.	Private school and public school	2
15.	Church school and private home	1
16.	Public school outside AISD, private school and private home	1
17.	Public school outside AISD, private home and day care	1
18.	Private school, public school, private home and day care	1
19.	Church school, public school, and child's home	1

Figure B. KINDERGARTEN PATTERNS OF FIRST-TIME FIRST GRADERS WHO ATTENDED KINDERGARTEN ELSEWHERE.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENTS WHO WERE KINDERGARTEN NONATTENDERS?

After the students who were kindergarten nonattenders were identified, they were described according to the following variables:

- What they did instead of kindergarten,
- Sex,
- Ethnicity,
- Service by compensatory programs,
- Family income level, and
- Geographic distribution.

What did they do instead of kindergarten?

Over half the 59 students known to be nonattenders (60%) were in day-care centers or were cared for in private homes other than their own. The rest were in their own homes. Figure C shows the breakdown of where the children spent their time.

Alternative	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Stayed at home	24	41%
Went to a day-care center	32	54%
Stayed at a private home	3	5%
TOTAL	59	100%

Figure C. WHAT STUDENTS WHO DID NOT ATTEND KINDERGARTEN ANYWHERE DID.

Were equal numbers of boys and girls nonattenders?

Of the students who were known to be nonattenders, 56% (33 of 59) were males and 44% (26 of 59) were females. This is different from their first grade; males are overrepresented among students who did not attend kindergarten. Figure D illustrates this finding.

GROUP	NUMBER OF MALES	NUMBER OF FEMALES	TOTAL
Students who did not attend K	33 (56%)	26 (44%)	59
Total number of first-time first-grade students	2,276 (50%)	2,274 (50%)	4,550

Figure D. SEX OF KINDERGARTEN NONATTENDERS AND THE SEX COMPOSITION OF THEIR FIRST-GRADE CLASS.

Did ethnic group proportions for nonattenders match first graders?

The distribution of students by ethnic group is shown in Figure E. The distribution of first-time first graders was used to find whether the two groups differ. The comparison shows a higher proportion of Black students and a lower proportion of Anglo students than in the first grade class.

Ethnic Group	Kindergarten Nonattenders	First-Time First Graders
1. American Indian	1 (1.7%)	30 (0.7%)
2. Asian	1 (1.7%)	111 (2.4%)
3. Black	15 (25.4%)	804 (17.8%)
4. Hispanic	17 (28.8%)	1,306 (28.7%)
5. Anglo/Other	25 (42.4%)	2,299 (50.5%)
TOTAL	59 (100.0%)	4,550 (100.0%)

Figure E. ETHNICITY OF KINDERGARTEN NONATTENDERS AND THEIR FIRST-GRADE CLASS.

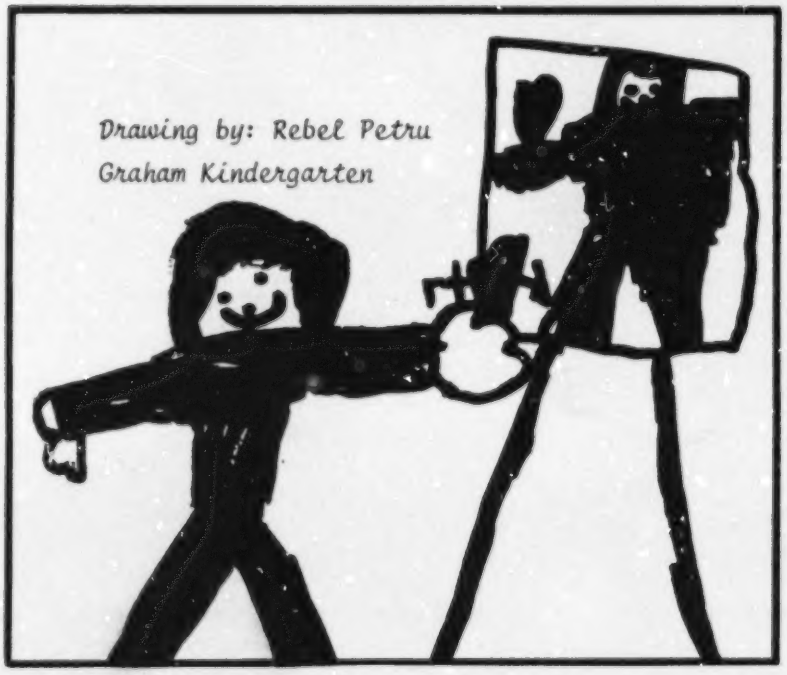
Are kindergarten nonattenders being served by compensatory education programs?

- 70% (19 of 27) of the students in Chapter 1 first grades are served by Chapter 1.
- Overall, only 44% (565 of 1,289) of first graders in the same Chapter 1 schools are served by Chapter 1.
- Nonattenders seem to be at greater risk than other first graders in Chapter 1 schools to be low achieving and thus served by Chapter 1.

Figure F shows proportion of nonattenders in Chapter 1 schools who are served compared with all first graders in the same schools. Figure G shows the number of nonattenders in the schools where they are in first grade, and the number who are served by Chapter 1.

	Number of Students Enrolled in Chapter 1 Schools	Number of Students Served by Chapter 1	Percentage Served
Kindergarten Non-attenders	27	19	70.4%
Students in first grade in the same Chapter 1 schools.	1,289	565	43.8%

Figure F. PERCENTAGES OF NONATTENDERS AND ALL FIRST GRADERS SERVED BY CHAPTER 1.



Schools	Number of Kindergarten Nonattenders Enrolled	Number of Kindergarten Nonattenders Served by Chapter 1
Chapter 1 Schools		
Allan	3	2
Allison	3	3
Brown	2	1
Casis	1	0
Dawson	2	2
Govaile	1	1
Harris	4	4
Maplewood	2	0
Metz	1	1
Norman	3	3
Oak Springs	1	0
Rosewood	1	1
Sanchez	2	0
Winn	1	1
Subtotal	27	19
Other Schools		
Andrews	2	
Barton Hills	1	
Bryker Woods	3	
Doss	1	
Highland Park	1	
Houston	2	
Joslin	2	
Langford	3	
Lee	2	
Linder	3	
Oak Hill	1	
Pecan Springs	3	
Pleasant Hill	1	
St. Elmo	1	
Summitt	1	
Travis Heights	1	
Williams	1	
Wooten	1	
Zilker	2	
SUBTOTAL	32	
TOTAL	59	19

Figure G. WHERE THE KINDERGARTEN NONATTENDERS ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN FIRST GRADE.

What is the family income level of the kindergarten nonattenders?

The enrollment of students in the free and reduced-price lunch is based on the reported income of parents. It was found that 95% (56 of 59) of the kindergarten nonattenders were participants in the program. Only 57% of all first graders are enrolled in the free and reduced-priced lunch program.

Figure H shows kindergarten nonattenders in the free and reduced-price lunch program.

Program	Kindergarten Nonattenders Enrolled
Free Lunch	46 (78%)
Reduced-Price Lunch	10 (17%)
Not in Program	3 (5%)
TOTAL	59 (100%)

Figure H. KINDERGARTEN NONATTENDERS IN THE FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH PROGRAM.

Where do kindergarten nonattenders live?

Kindergarten nonattenders are scattered across the District. Figure I shows where nonattenders should have gone to kindergarten. Since kindergarten students are not bussed, these are the areas where they live.

Attendance Area	Number of Kindergarten Nonattenders	Attendance Area	Number of Kindergarten Nonattenders
Allison	2	Linder	3
Andrews	2	Maplewood	1
Barrington	1	Norman	3
Barton Hills	1	Oak Hill	1
Brentwood	1	Oak Springs	1
Brooke	1	Odom	2
Brown	2	Pecan Springs	3
Campbell	1	Pleasant Hill	1
Cook	1	Sanchez	2
Cunningham	2	Sims	1
Dawson	2	Summitt	1
Doss	1	Travis Heights	1
Allan	3	Williams	1
Govalle	1	Winn	1
Harris	4	Wooten	1
Houston	2	Zavala	1
Joslin	2	Zilker	2
Langford	2		
Lee	2	TOTAL	59

Figure I. WHERE KINDERGARTEN NONATTENDERS SHOULD HAVE GONE TO KINDERGARTEN.

IS THE RETENTION RATE THE SAME FOR AISD KINDERGARTEN ATTENDERS AND NONATTENDERS?

We found:

- 9.2% (463 of 5,013) of the first graders were retainees.
- 8.7% (381 of 4,375) of the students who did attend kindergarten in AISD were retainees.
- 12.9% (82 of 638) of the students who did not attend kindergarten in AISD were retainees.

Figure J compares students who were retained with those who are enrolled in first grade for the first time on whether they attended a kindergarten in AISD.

	AISD kindergarten attenders	AISD kindergarten nonattenders	TOTAL
Retained students in first grade	381	82	463
First-time first graders	3,994	556	4,550
Total number of students in first grade	4,375	638	5,013

Figure J. FIRST GRADERS BY RETENTION STATUS AND PREVIOUS ENROLLMENT IN AN AISD KINDERGARTEN.

WHY DID PARENTS NOT SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO KINDERGARTEN?

A telephone survey was conducted with a sample of parents to ask why children did not attend kindergarten. Statements were grouped according to whether children stayed at home or attended a day-care center.

Why children stayed at home:

We obtained 11 statements from parents on why they kept their children at home.

Work-related reasons: Four parents were transient and/or looking for work and did not enroll their children in school. They were afraid that enrolling the children for a short period of time would not be good for the students.

Immigrants to the U.S.: There were three parents who were immigrants to the U.S., two from Mexico and one from El Salvador.

Personal Reasons: There were two parents who said disputes over child custody were the main reason for keeping the child at home.

Other reasons: There were two single responses:

"I was afraid my child was too young and would not understand what was going on in school."

"We lived in the countryside near Dallas and it was not convenient to send the child to school."

Why students attended day-care centers:

Eighteen parents gave reasons why they sent their children to day-care centers. Some of the statements indicated that children received some instruction in the day-care centers.

Extended hours: Five parents needed their children supervised during the hours they were at work.

Age: Three parents did not register their children in AISD because they believed the children were too young to attend.

Transportation: Lack of transportation was cited by one parent. Another parent said:

"It was more convenient to have both children in the same place."

Job-related reasons: Two parents in the sample worked at day-care centers and preferred to have their children with them.

Continuity: Two parents decided to keep their children in the day-care centers they had been attending since "they were very young"; one of the children had attended the same day-care center since he was two.

Other reasons:

"The location of the center is closer to home."

"My child attended a day-care center in Ireland because it was related to my husband's job."

"I thought that the AISD kindergartens were for poor children only."

WHY DID PARENTS ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN ELSEWHERE?

There were 33 families contacted as part of the follow-up procedure who reported that their children attended other kindergartens. Most (26) attended public schools out of Austin. Four attended church or private schools in other towns.

Three parents were in Austin but sent their children to other kindergartens. Their comments were:

"I wanted my child in a religious school."

"I did not want my child in school for six hours a day because he was still taking naps; he was not ready for full days."

"The child could start earlier and was better prepared at Montessori."

Drawing by: Tasha Kroeger
Graham Kindergarten

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Dr. Glynn Ligon, Acting Director

Dr. Jonathan J. Curtis, Senior Evaluator

Evaluators
Dr. Martin Arocena
Dr. Catherine Christner
Walter Jordan-Davis
Evangelina Mangino

Data Analyst
Carol Pankratz

Secretary
Leonila M. Gonzalez

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ed Small, President
Manuel Navarro, Vice President
Nan Clayton, Secretary
Larry G. Waterhouse
Peter W. Werner, M.D.
Bernice Hart
Abel R. Ruiz

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Dr. John Ellis

Publication Number: 83.41

All drawings in this report are courtesy the Graham Kindergarten class of Ann Murray

BEST COPY AVAILABLE